PRICKLY PEAR
LAND TRUST
Connecting Land and People

November 22, 2016

Board and Staff of the Montana Future Fisheries Improvement Program:

Prickly Pear Land Trust (PPLT) in Helena, Montana, thanks you for considering a $25,571 gift for a fish passage on Sevenmile Creek, associated with the with the $4 million Peaks to Creeks Initiative to provide habitat restoration, open space protection, and increased recreational opportunity on 558 acres in the Helena Valley.

PPLT's acquisition of 558 acres and its plans to connect that acreage with substantive public recreational estate, and to restore, protect, and create recreational opportunities for a diverse and often underserved set of stakeholders has gained national commendation: The Land Trust Alliance has singled out the project as one of the top community-based projects in the nation. This accolade was earned by holistic planning and engagement of all segments of the community. Further, this project implements one of three top priority goals of the Lake Helena Watershed Restoration Plan — to reduce excessive sediment currently threatening fish and aquatic life in the watershed.

Perhaps the most astonishing and heartening aspect of this Initiative has been the outpouring of community support from an extraordinarily diverse set of partners and constituents. By way of illustration, we offer, in their own words, the endorsements we have received from local partners:

Award-winning Capital High Teacher Tom Pedersen: *"My entire educational career as a teacher, Honors biology II and Science Seminar (39 years) at Capital High School in Helena, has been to 'immerse' my students in nature. We need to connect this generation to the outdoors, not only in our national parks and forests, but also in our connections to our cities; safe, inexpensive places where our kids can hike, ride their bikes and explore after school or on the weekends. The Peaks to Creeks acquisition gives that opportunity to all of our children."*

Spring Meadow Resources Executive Director Jim Bissett: *"Spring Meadow Resources is thrilled to see this development in our neighborhood, bringing better connectivity and new trails that will have benefits to all, including the disabilities community. Being able to access and cross the creek to PPLT's new property, or over to Spring Meadow Lake State Park will open many wonderful and new outdoor experiences for our residents."*

Gregory Normandin, MD, Fort Harrison VA Hospital: *"Accessing the Peaks to Creeks trail system right outside Fort Harrison VA property will benefit Veterans in numerous ways. In particular, the Residential Rehab Treatment Program plans to use the trail system for therapeutic endeavors. Easy access will allow Veterans to exercise and enjoy being outdoors while at Fort Harrison VA. Additionally, the trail system will provide a safe way for Veterans to access VA resources using alternative means of transportation."*

This Initiative offers the Helena community the unprecedented opportunity to improve riparian health, and connect recreational open space and cultural assets in every direction for a diverse constituency. Immense thanks for considering support for this fish passage, and for the overall support it will lend to the Peaks to Creeks Initiative.

Best regards,

Mary Hollow, Executive Director

P.O. BOX 892 40 W. LAWRENCE ST., SUITE A HELENA, MT 59624 (406) 442-0490
info@pricklypearlt.org www.pricklypearlt.org Fax (406) 442-1790

ACCREDITED LAND TRUST ACCREDITATION COMMISSION

FUTURE FISHERIES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
GRANT APPLICATION

(Please fill in the highlighted areas)
all sections (IA, IB, IC, etc.) must be addressed or the application will be considered invalid

I. APPLICANT INFORMATION

A. Applicant Name: Prickly Pear Land Trust

B. Mailing Address: P.O. Box 892

C. City: Helena State: MT Zip: 59624

Telephone: (406)442-0490 E-mail: lanie@pricklypearlt.org

D. Contact Person: Lisa Bay, Lisa Bay Consulting

Address if different from Applicant: 31 Division St

City: Helena State: MT Zip: 59601

Telephone: (406)442-9671 E-mail: lisamaebay@gmail.com

E. Landowner and/or Lessee Name (if other than Applicant):

Mailing Address:

City: State: Zip:

Telephone: E-mail:

II. PROJECT INFORMATION*

A. Project Name: Sevenmile Creek Restoration

River, stream, or lake: Sevenmile Creek

Location: Township: 10N Range: 4W Section: 10
Latitude: 46.64064 N Longitude: 112.10256 W *within project (decimal degrees)*

County: Lewis & Clark

B. Purpose of Project:

To provide fish passage around an irrigation structure that fragments existing populations of brown trout and Eastern brook trout in Sevenmile Creek. This proposal is part of a larger project to restore 2.2 miles of Sevenmile Creek, expected to substantially improve brown and brook trout populations and enhance public fishing opportunity one mile from Helena.

C. Brief Project Description:

Prickly Pear Land Trust (PPLT) seeks $25,571 in support from the Future Fisheries Program for installation of a fish bypass channel around an existing irrigation dam on Sevenmile Creek. In early 2016, PPLT acquired a 350-acre parcel in the Helena Valley, part of the 556-acre Peaks to Creeks Initiative to preserve open space, conduct habitat restoration, and provide recreational opportunities near the State Capital. Former owners of the parcel had heavily grazed it for decades, removed willows from the riparian corridor, rechannelized the stream, and scalped topsoil adjacent to the riparian corridor. An existing irrigation diversion currently prevents fish passage, disconnecting fisheries habitat for brown and Eastern brook trout.

PPLT is currently pursuing restoration of 2.2 miles of Sevenmile Creek (Figure 1) that run through the property. In fall 2016, PPLT contracted for a geomorphological assessment of the stream to determine restoration protocols. The assessment delineated the stream into four geomorphologically unique sub-reaches, each with distinct problems and features (Figure 1). Sub-reach 3 (SM3) encompasses 2,740 feet of stream channel, with the upper boundary defined by an irrigation diversion structure (Figure 2) that marks a distinct grade break in the channel profile. A course rocky bed descends from the structure into a deeply incised channel with numerous vertical eroding banks over 10 feet in height. Poor maintenance of the diversion dam has resulted in development of an avulsion channel around the structure, with only a small wedge of floodplain alluvium preventing flows from bypassing the structure. The diversion likely serves as a partial fish passage barrier when the check boards are removed and a full barrier when the boards are in place. There is some mature woody vegetation in the entrenched channel; however, recruitment appears limited by grazing and high-energy conditions due to the high degree of entrenchment.

To address these problems, the assessment offers a restoration prescription for each sub-reach, including alternatives to reconnect fisheries habitat. Alt. 1 would change the point of diversion (POD), remove the current diversion, divert the stream into its original channel, and build a new fish friendly diversion, and Alt. 2 would build a step-pool fish passage around the diversion, while at the same time addressing the avulsion area above the diversion. A denil-type fish ladder was considered, but rejected due to additional long-term maintenance needs, the inability to address the avulsion channel, and reduced functional life relative to a bypass channel. Alt. 2 was chosen because water rights holders sharing the diversion would not commit to supporting a change in POD, and Alt 1 was estimated to cost about $1 million. Alt 2 also directly addresses erosion problems associated with the avulsion channel.

In October 2016, PPLT contracted Confluence Consulting, Inc. to design a fish bypass (Sheet 1 & 2. Figure 3 shows a similar fish passage structure on Clear Creek). The proposed structure is expected to: pass fish while reducing the risk of the stream circumventing the irrigation structure, improve water quality by reducing bank erosion, and re-establish vegetative cover. Trout at multiple life stages will be able to pass up and downstream of the diversion dam, which should reduce population fragmentation and allow passage to preferred spawning habitats above and below the diversion. Ultimately, public access to the parcel will provide ample fishing opportunity for the Helena angling community where few fishing opportunities currently exist close to town.

Partners for the fish passage include Montana Trout Unlimited, the City of Helena, and Northwestern Energy. Additional funding provided by Northwestern Energy for restoration work in SM3 will complement the proposed fish passage. An application for restoration support of SM1 and SM2 is currently being submitted to Corps of Engineers by Montana Aquatic Resources, Inc., and fundraising for restoration of SM4 will begin in 2017.

D. Length of stream or size of lake that will be treated: 200 feet for the fish passage, 2.2 miles overall

E. Project Budget:

Grant Request (Dollars): $ 25,571

Contribution by Applicant (Dollars): $ 5,070 In-kind $ 1000

(salaries of government employees are not considered as matching contributions)

Contribution from other Sources (Dollars): $ 20,000 In-kind $ 825

(attach verification - See page 2 budget template)

Total Project Cost: $ 52,466.25

F. Attach itemized (line item) budget – see template

G. Attach specific project plans, detailed sketches, plan views, photographs, maps, evidence of landowner consent, evidence of public support and fish biologist support, and/or other information necessary to evaluate the merits of the project. If project involves water leasing or water salvage complete supplemental questionnaire (fwp.mt.gov/habitat/futurefisheries/supplement2.doc).

H. Attach land management and maintenance plans that will ensure protection of the reclaimed area.

III. PROJECT BENEFITS*

A. What species of fish will benefit from this project?:

Brown trout and brook trout.

B. How will the project protect or enhance wild fish habitat?:

The irrigation structure physically segregates fish populations by partially or fully blocking upstream passage. The structure also thermally segregates fish by impounding water above the dam and creating a heat sink. The bypass channel will allow trout at multiple life stages to pass upstream and downstream of the irrigation dam, while proposed stream restoration treatments in SM2 and SM3 are expected to minimize the effects of the heat sink by increasing stream shading and reducing the impoundment of water above the diversion. Both brown and brook trout spawn in the fall, with staging and some spawning occurring during the irrigation season when the diversion structure is still operational. The bypass channel will allow passage to preferred habitats during the critical fall spawning period. Preferred land management strategies will likely lead to improved maintenance and upkeep at the diversion dam, such as removing check boards at the end of irrigation season. Proper maintenance and upkeep can help minimize negative effects to the fishery and stream function.

C. Will the project improve fish populations and/or fishing? To what extent?:

Self-sustaining populations of brown and brook trout currently exist in this reach, but improved fish passage is expected to improve fish abundance by allowing access to preferred spawning and nursery habitats above and below the diversion dam. Fish passage coupled with other proposed restoration activities is expected to substantially improve fish habitat above and below the diversion dam and also improve water quality by reducing stream bank erosion, providing vegetative cover, improving stream flows, and improving stream shading.

D. Will the project increase public fishing opportunity for wild fish and, if so, how?:

Both brook trout and brown trout are highly susceptible to angling, and increased abundance in this stream reach is expected to provide additional public opportunity. PPLT intends to manage the property as open space with public recreational opportunities (including fishing).

E. The project agreement includes a 20-year maintenance commitment. Please discuss your ability to meet this commitment.

PPLT would make the 20-year maintenance commitment for the fish passage, funded by on-site grazing fees, potential endowments from Montana Aquatic Resource Services, and via private fundraising, if needed. In the unlikely event that PPLT sold the land, a legal maintenance agreement and any residual maintenance endowment would transfer with the land.

F. What was the cause of habitat degradation in the area of this project and how will the project correct the cause?:

Former owners of the property removed willows from the riparian corridor, rechannelized the stream, scalped topsoil adjacent to the riparian corridor, and substantially overgrazed the property. The existing irrigation diversion did not provide fish passage, subsequently disconnecting fisheries habitat. Since PPLT acquired the parcel in early 2016, cattle have been removed from the property, substantial weed infestations have been mapped, and restoration planning has begun. Proposed fencing will allow about 120 acres of sub-irrigated pasture to be grazed in the future. The fish passage will allow brown and brook trout populations to reconnect at all life stages.

G. What public benefits will be realized from this project?:

Fish passage at the diversion dam will allow fish to reach critical habitats, which is expected to increase fish abundance. Planned restoration throughout this 2.2 mile section of Sevenmile will improve fish habitat while also reducing bank erosion, improving water quality, and improving stream function and vegetation growth within the riparian corridor. PPLT plans to maintain the parcel as open space and provide public access for recreational use. Improved land and grazing management practices will enhance riparian and upland habitats and improve diversity of flora and fauna in the area. The proximity of the parcel to the city of Helena makes access easy via vehicle, bike, or walking and provides a conduit for the Helena community to connect with resources in the Helena valley.

H. Will the project interfere with water or property rights of adjacent landowners? (explain):

PPLT has a strong priority and a well-documented and adjudicated water right. The water right claim #41I 190990 00 is in shared ownership between PPLT and the Lazy E Ranch. The flow rate is listed as 3.13 cfs for 334 acres with a period of use January 1 to December 31. The right lists the main diversion as the IOOF ditch in section 10 that has in the past irrigated most of the PPLT property in Section 10. Ownership of the right has been stipulated to be split 65 miners inches (1.63 cfs) to PPLT, and 60 MI (1.5 cfs) to the Lazy E Ranch. No change in the use of the diversion or the diversion structure itself is proposed, as discussed in C. Project Description. The fish passage is designed to assure that irrigation flows are maintained for the historic purpose and season of use. The fish bypass channel outlined in this proposal was chosen partially because it does not interfere with water rights and historic agricultural uses.

I. Will the project result in the development of commercial recreational use on the site?: (explain):

No.

J. Is this project associated with the reclamation of past mining activity?:

No. The previous landowner mined topsoil on upland areas, but the effects to the riparian zone appear minimal. Degradation of the riparian area is due to prior poor land-use practices, as mentioned in F., above.

Each approved project sponsor must enter into a written agreement with the Department specifying terms and duration of the project.

IV. AUTHORIZING STATEMENT

I (we) hereby declare that the information and all statements to this application are true, complete, and accurate to the best of my (our) knowledge and that the project or activity complies with rules of the Future Fisheries Improvement Program.

Applicant Signature: Mary Ann Date: 11/28/16

Sponsor (if applicable):

***Highlighted boxes will automatically expand.**

Mail To: **Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks**
Habitat Protection Bureau
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

E-mail To: **Michelle McGree**
mmcgree@mt.gov
(electronic submissions MUST be signed)

Incomplete or late applications will be rejected and returned to applicant.
Applications may be rejected if this form is modified.

*****Applications may be submitted at anytime, but must be signed and received by the Future Fisheries Program Officer in Helena before December 1 and June 1 of each year to be considered for the subsequent funding period.*****

Sevenmile Creek fish passage 016-2017

BUDGET TEMPLATE SHEET FOR FUTURE FISHERIES PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

Both tables must be completed or the application will be returned

WORK ITEMS (ITEMIZE BY CATEGORY)	NUMBER OF UNITS	UNIT DESCRIPTION*	COST/UNIT	TOTAL COST	CONTRIBUTIONS			
					FUTURE FISHERIES REQUEST	IN-KIND SERVICES**	IN-KIND CASH	TOTAL
Personnel* **								
Water rights interpretatation and flow measurement	15	HR	$ 55.00	$ 825.00		$ 825.00		$ 825.00
PPLT Administration	45	HR	$ 50.00	$ 2,250	$ 1,250.00	$ 1,000.00		$ 2,250.00
Geomorphological Assessment	1	Report	$ 20,000.00	$ 20,000			$ 20,000.00	$ 20,000
Survey-Engineer 1	4	HR	$ 75.00	$ 300.00	$ 300.00			$ 300.00
Design*				$ 5,070.00			$ 5,070.00	$ 5,070.00
Permitting**				$ 3,632.50	$ 3,632.50			$ 3,632.50
Construction Oversight	22	HR	$ 95.00	$ 2,090.00	$ 2,090.00			$ 2,090.00
			Sub-Total	$ 34,167.50	$ 7,272.50	$ 1,825.00	$ 25,070.00	$ 34,167.50
Travel								
Mileage	1100	Miles	$ 0.55	$ 605.00	$ 605.00			$ 605.00
Per diem	4.25	Days	$ 15.00	$ 63.75	$ 63.75			$ 63.75
Lodging	2	Days	$ 100.00	$ 200.00	$ 200.00			$ 200.00
			Sub-Total	$ 868.75	$ 868.75	$ -	$ -	$ 868.75
Construction Materials****								
Riprap (delivered)	220	CY	$ 38.00	$ 8,360.00	$ 8,360.00			$ 8,360.00
6" Pit Run (delivered)	50	CY	$ 18.00	$ 900.00	$ 900.00			$ 900.00
Geotextile Fabric	1	Roll	$ 600.00	$ 600.00	$ 600.00			$ 600.00
Upland seed mix	1	LS	$ 100.00	$ 100.00	$ 100.00			$ 100.00
			Sub-Total	$ 9,960.00	$ 9,960.00	$ -	$ -	$ 9,960.00
Equipment and Labor								
Move rock to north side of channel	4	HR	$ 125.00	$ 500.00	$ 500.00			$ 500.00
Excavate bypass alignment	250	CY	$ 4.00	$ 1,000.00	$ 1,000.00			$ 1,000.00
Install geotextile	6	HR	$ 35.00	$ 210.00	$ 210.00			$ 210.00
Place riprap	20	HR	$ 135.00	$ 2,700.00	$ 2,700.00			$ 2,700.00
Place pit run	4	HR	$ 135.00	$ 540.00	$ 540.00			$ 540.00
Place topsoil and sod	250	CY	$ 4.00	$ 1,000.00	$ 1,000.00			$ 1,000.00
Survey-grade GPS unit	1	Days	$ 450.00	$ 450.00	$ 450.00			$ 450.00
Reseed disturbed areas	2	HR	$ 35.00	$ 70.00	$ 70.00	$ -	$ -	$ 70.00
			Sub-Total	$ 6,470.00	$ 6,470.00	$ -	$ -	$ 6,470.00
Mobilization								
Equipment mobilization	2	EA	$ 500.00	$ 1,000.00	$ 1,000.00			$ 1,000.00
			Sub-Total	$ 1,000.00	$ 1,000.00	$ -	$ -	$ 1,000.00
			TOTALS	$ 52,466.25	$ 25,571.25	$ 1,825.00	$ 25,070.00	$ 52,466.25

*__Design costs__ include scouring calculations and riprap sizing, design drafting, and construction specs and quatities: Project Manager - 6hrs@ $110/hr = $660; Engineer - 18hrs@ $95=$1,710; Engineer 1 - 36 hrs@ $$75=$2700 Total:$5070

**__Permitting costs__ include wetland deliniation, deliniation report, and preparation and submittal of joint application: Engineer - 12hrs@ $95= $1140; Wetland Scientist - 28hrs@$85=$2380; RTK Survey - 0.25 days@$450/day= $112.50= $3632.50

(Revised 11/28/2016)

BUDGET TEMPLATE SHEET FOR FUTURE FISHERIES PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

Total design and construction oversight costs: With all due respect, we believe that confining design and oversight costs to 15% on small scale projects encourages less-than-optimal planning and execution while increasing liability to the design engineer. Larger scale projects typically require a lesser percentage of design and oversight in proportion to overall cost, simply due to the economy of scale. For example, the design of a bank stabilization project will cost nearly the same if you are stabilizing 100 feet or 10,000 feet if the same technique is applied. These costs total 13.6 % of this total project budget.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS:

All of the columns in the budget table and the matching contribution table MUST be completed appropriately or the application will be invalid. Please see the example budget sheet for additional clarification.

*Units = feet, hours, inches, etc. Do not use lump sum unless there is no other way to describe the costs.

**Can include in-kind materials. Justification for in-kind labor (e.g. hourly rates used for calculations). Describe here or in text.

Reminder: Government salaries cannot be used as in-kind match

***The Review Panel suggests that design and oversight costs associated with a proposed project not exceed 15% of the total project budget. If design and oversight costs are in excess of 15%, applications must include a minimum of two competitive bids for the cost of undertaking the project.

****The Review Panel recommends a maximum fencing cost of $1.50 per foot. Additional costs may be the responsibility of the applicant and/or partners.

MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS (do not include requested funds)

CONTRIBUTOR	IN-KIND SERVICE	IN-KIND CASH	TOTAL	Secured? (Y/N)
Prickly Pear Land Trust	$ 1,000.00	$ 5,070.00	$ 6,070.00	Y
Northwestern Energy's PM&E Program	$ -	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	Y
Citiy of Helena	$ -	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	Y
Trout Unlimited	$ 825.00		$ 825.00	Y
	$ -	$ -	$ -	
	$ -	$ -	$ -	
	$ -	$ -	$ -	
	$ -	$ -	$ -	
	$ -	$ -	$ -	
TOTALS	$ 1,825.00	$ 25,070.00	$ 26,895.00	

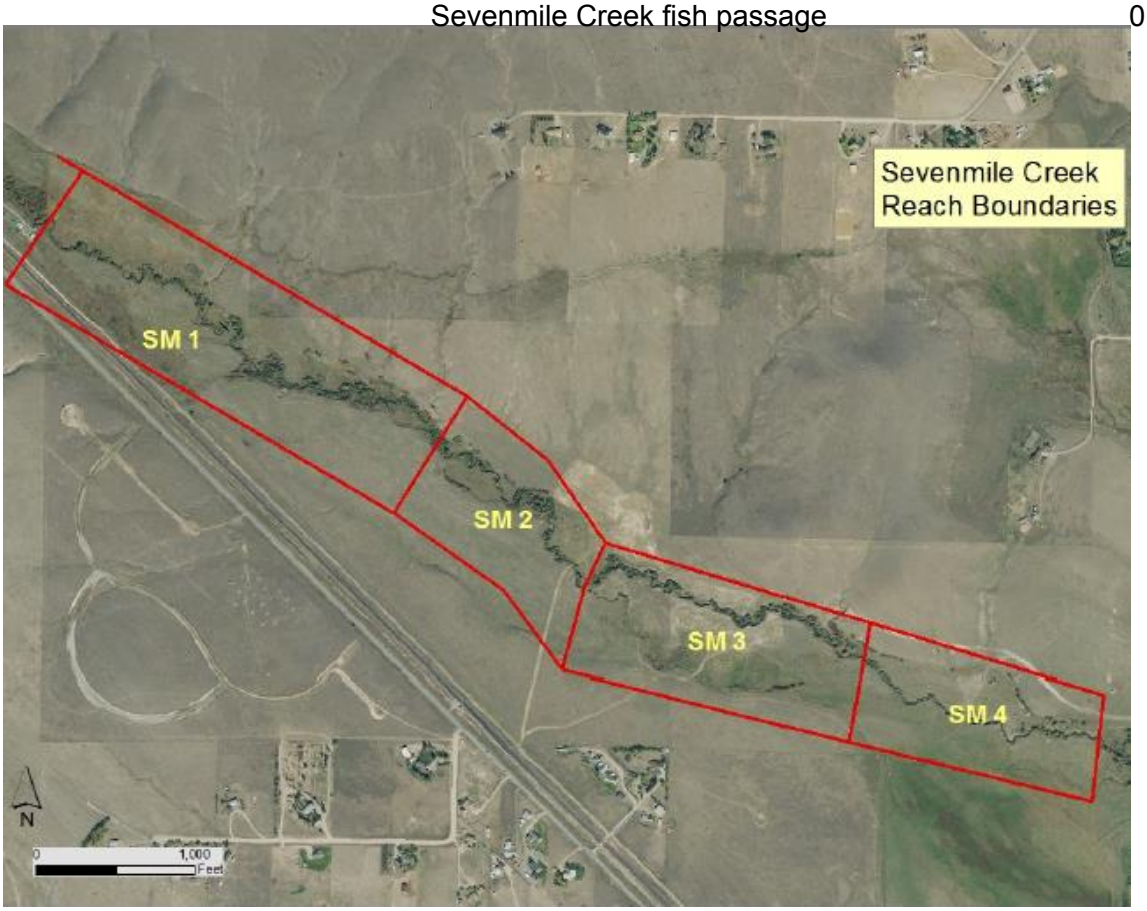


Figure 1: Four distinct stream reaches defined via a geomorphological survey in 2016. The irrigation dam and proposed fish bypass structure is located at the break between SM2 and SM3.

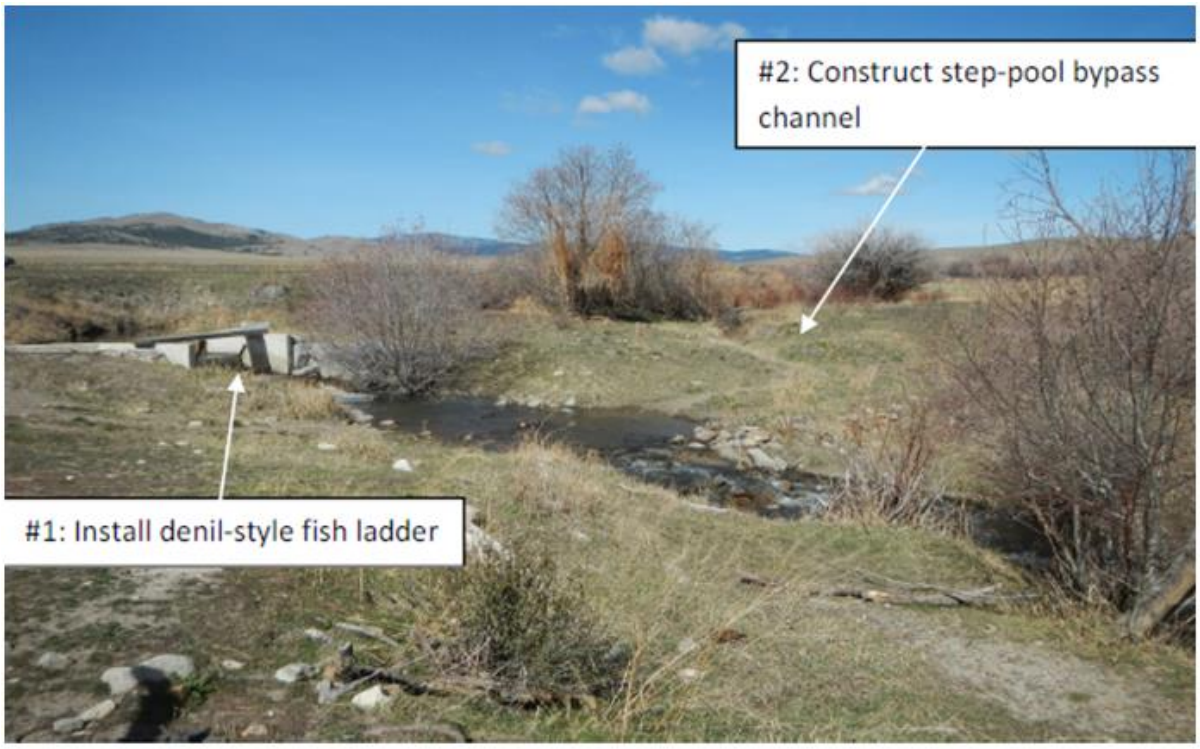


Figure 2: Photo of the diversion dam and two fish passage options. The step-pool bypass channel was chosen for long-term viability and to use the avulsion channel adjacent to the dam.

DRAWN BY: RLB	Date: 11/3/16
DESIGNED BY: RLB	CCI JOB NO. PPLT.001
CHECKED BY: MDS	FILE NAME: X:\PROJECTS\SEVENMILE\CAD\FISHBYPASS2.DWG

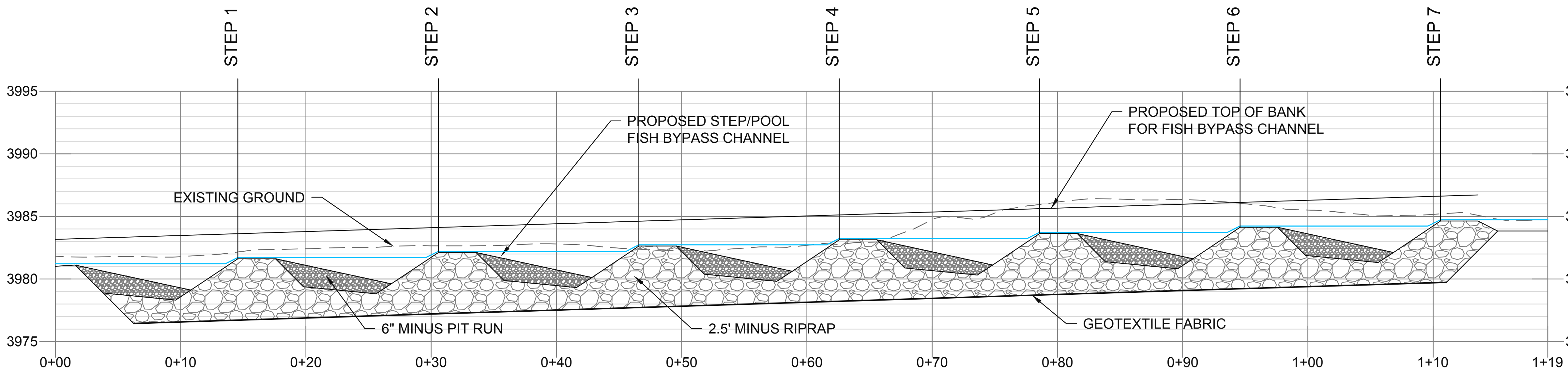
REV.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	APP'D
1	-	-	-	
2	-	-	-	

CONFLUENCE
consulting incorporated

SEVENMILE CREEK
FISH BYPASS
PRICKLY PEAR LAND TRUST

SITE PLAN

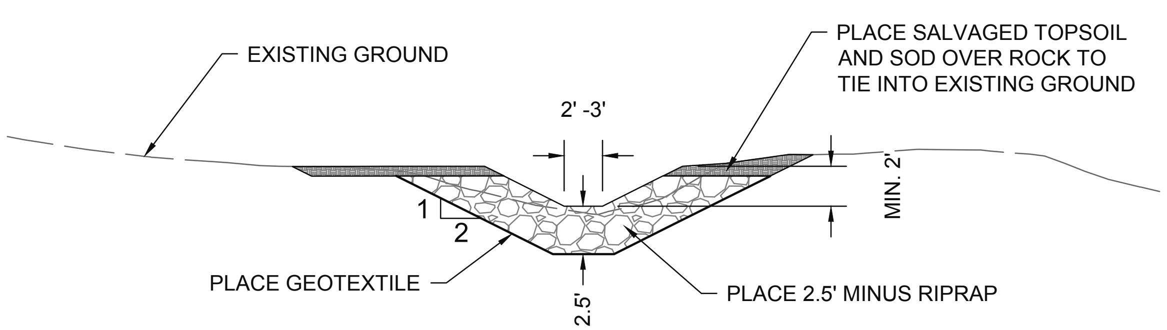
SHEET: 1



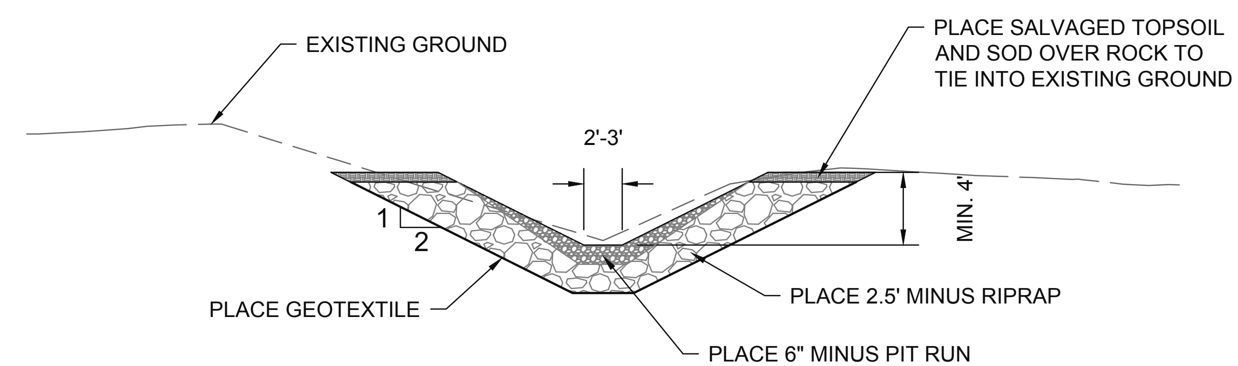
FISH BYPASS CHANNEL PROFILE

STEP STATION AND ELEVATION		
STEP	STATION	ELEVATION
1	14.6	3981.6
2	30.6	3982.1
3	46.6	3982.6
4	62.6	3983.1

STEP STATION AND ELEVATION		
STEP	STATION	ELEVATION
5	78.6	3983.6
6	94.6	3984.1
7	110.6	3984.6



TYPICAL STEP CREST



TYPICAL PLUNGE POOL

NOTES:

1) SALVAGE SOD AND TOPSOIL ALONG PROPOSED BYPASS ALIGNMENT.
2) PLACE RIPRAP TO CREATE STEPS.
3) PLACE 6" MINUS PIT RUN IN POOLS.
4) COVER BANKS WITH SALVAGED TOPSOIL AND SOD.
5) DROP BETWEEN STEPS SHOULD BE A MAXIMUM OF 0.5'.
6) GEOTEXTILE SHALL BE PROPEX 801 OR EQUIVALENT.
7) FILL VOIDS IN RIPRAP AT STEP CRESTS WITH PIT RUN OR FINE GRAINED MATERIAL FROM EXCAVATION.

RIPRAP GRADATION	
PERCENT PASSING (%)	DIAMETER (FT)
100	2.5
85	2.0
50	1.7
15	1.0

ESTIMATED MATERIAL QUANTITIES		
MATERIAL	UNIT	AMOUNT
RIPRAP	CY	220
6" MINUS PIT RUN	CY	50
GEOTEXTILE	SQ YD	300
EXCAVATION	CY	250
TOPSOIL/SOD	CY	40

DRAWN BY: RLB
DESIGNED BY: RLB
CHECKED BY: MDS
Date: 11/3/16
CCI JOB NO. PPLT.001
FILE NAME: X:\PROJECT\SEVENMILE\CAD\FISHBYPASS2.DWG

REV.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	APP'D
1	-	-	-	
2	-	-	-	

CONFLUENCE consulting incorporated

SEVENMILE CREEK FISH BYPASS PRICKLY PEAR LAND TRUST

PROFILE AND CROSS-SECTIONS

SHEET: 2

Figure 3: Photo illustration of a similar fish-passage design: Clear Creek fish passage project (2004) funded by the Future Fisheries Program. Upper photo shows culvert before construction. Lower photo shows culvert immediately following installation of rock step pools. (Photos by Mike Sanctuary).

Sevenmile Creek Restoration Land Management & Maintenance Plan

The management and maintenance plan is split into four main categories: livestock, weeds, recreation and the fish passage. PPLT intends to set up monitoring protocols within each of these categories and is working with the staff at the Montana Department of Environmental Quality to begin water quality monitoring in conjunction with the restoration.

Livestock:

Cattle will be confined to a 120-acre off stream pasture. PPLT will use a high-intensity, short-duration grazing system and ensure that there will be no cattle within the riparian area.

Weeds:

PPLT has prepared a weed assessment of the entire property and plans to begin an integrated pest-management approach using mechanical, chemical and biological control. We began this process with a volunteer weed pull event in 2016.

Recreation:

PPLT intends to construct a recreational trail that loops the stream while protecting the restoration by using deliberate access points to the stream. Management of public access will include planting certain areas with thick vegetation and monitoring the stream and vegetative damage to assess the need for further public access control through adaptive management processes such as fencing and signage. We expect to do this most intensively during the first three years, post-restoration.

Fish Passage:

The step-pool fish passage was selected in part due to its low-maintenance needs and its ability to address erosion issues. We will assess the need for maintenance of the passage via visual monitoring and intend to conduct electrofishing surveys from below and above the dam to monitor changes in fish populations. During monitoring, we will evaluate the need for fencing and signage around the fish passage.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

November 22, 2016

PO Box 200701
930 Custer Ave W
Helena, MT 59620

Michelle McGree
Future Fisheries Program Officer
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620

RE: Sevenmile Creek Fish Passage and Habitat Restoration

Dear Michelle and FFIP Panel Members,

I am writing to support Prickly Pear Land Trust's application for funding for fish passage at an irrigation diversion structure on a reach of Sevenmile Creek near Helena, MT.

The riparian corridor of Sevenmile Creek across this parcel has been substantially impacted by several decades of poor land use and grazing practices. Prior to PPLT acquisition of the property, FWP identified an irrigation diversion dam on the property as a barrier to fish passage; however, reluctance to work with the previous landowner precluded any work getting done. Since acquiring the property PPLT has sought technical guidance from FWP, and has recognized the importance of incorporating fish passage into the overall stream restoration plan on the parcel.

This reach of Sevenmile Creek already contains sustainable populations of brook and brown trout, but the fishery is negatively impacted by habitat fragmentation from the irrigation structure and habitat degradation from previous land use practices. Providing passage at the irrigation dam is expected to connect trout at various life stages to critical habitats above and below the dam, while proposed restoration work throughout the entire reach is expected to positively improve habitat quality and quantity. The proximity of the stream reach to Helena also provides additional fishing opportunity to the community.

FWP has worked with PPLT on previous projects; most recently on Prickly Pear Creek where PPLT donated land which became the first FWP Fishing Access Site on a stream in the Helena valley. FWP has also assisted PPLT on this project by providing technical expertise and by securing funding for various aspects of the project. We look forward to continuing our relationship with PPLT on this and future projects.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Eric Roberts
Helena Area Fish Biologist

November 21, 2016

Future Fisheries;

I am a fifteen year-old Sophomore at Helena High School. Growing up in Montana, fishing has always been a very big part of my childhood. A lot of my great memories with friends and family have been created on fishing trips. Fishing helps me learn so much about the world around me. When we go fishing, we can get away from technology, explore the outdoors, and discover new areas. Many times though, we are not able to go because of our busy schedules and the lack of areas to go that are close enough to home. Having more places to fish close to town, like Sevenmile Creek would make it so much easier for my family to do what we love and work it around our busy schedules. I know that many families, much like own, don't have a lot of time to go on long drives in order to go fishing. Therefore, having access to fishing much closer to our own homes will be very helpful so that people can pass down this tradition to their children and teach them about it in a safe environment.

Sincerely,

Kendall Trettin

Kendall Trettin

MARS
MONTANA AQUATIC RESOURCES SERVICES

November 15th, 2016

Michelle McGree
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Habitat Protection Bureau
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Dear Ms. McGree,

I'm writing in support of Prickly Pear Land Trust's grant proposal "Sevenmile Creek Restoration" submitted to the Future Fisheries Improvement Program. Montana Aquatic Resources Services (MARS) is partnering with Prickly Pear Land Trust on the Sevenmile Creek Restoration Project by funding restoration and protection of sub-reaches 1 and 2 (SM1 and SM2), as well as putting a deed restriction on a wetland area upstream of the restoration site. The project site has been split up into four segments (SM1, SM2, SM3, SM4) for planning purposes.

MARS supports that construction of a fish bypass channel between SM2 and SM3 will significantly improve fish habitat and fishing opportunities in Sevenmile Creek by reducing population fragmentation, allowing passage to preferred spawning and nursery areas, and facilitating natural flow and temperature patterns. A fish bypass channel will greatly compliment the other restoration activities occurring as part of the multi year project.

MARS has committed funds for the restoration and preservation of SM1 and SM2 including invasive species management, grazing management to keep livestock out of the riparian area, and long-term protection of reaches SM1 and SM2 in the form of a deed restriction. These initiatives will benefit overall riparian health, water quality, and fish habitat. In addition, MARS has proposed to put a deed restriction on a wetland complex upstream of the restoration area on Sevenmile Creek. Preserving the wetland complex will benefit Sevenmile Creek by improving downstream water quality and mitigating flood effects, as well as providing valuable habitat for fish, beaver, birds, and other wildlife.

The Sevenmile Creek restoration project is a comprehensive, long-term project that will significantly improve habitat and fishing opportunities for brown trout and brook trout. A fish bypass channel is a key factor in creating a successful restoration project.

Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Wendy Weaver
Executive Director

Montana Aquatic Resources Services | PO Box 1289, Bozeman, MT 59771 | info@montanaaquaticresources.org

Patrick Byorth
Director of Montana Water, Western Water & Habitat Project

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Habitat Protection Bureau
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

October 27, 2016

Dear Michelle and Citizens Panel,

I am writing on behalf of Trout Unlimited in support of Prickly Pear Land Trust's application for funding of the Sevenmile Creek restoration project in Helena, Montana. Trout Unlimited sees considerable merit in the Sevenmile Creek project because it will: restore over 2 miles of a creek corridor that has been badly damaged from prior land-use activities, reconnect a fishery currently separated by an irrigation diversion, reduce sediment loading from the site, and provide an educational forum for students and the community to learn about stream ecology and restoration.

Like Trout Unlimited's work restoring streams across Montana, Prickly Pear Land Trust has a track record of success in community engagement and in forging new areas of conservation. It routinely involves citizens in its work and has already had a volunteer weed-pulling crew on the Sevenmile this spring. Further, the land trust secured the first fishing access site in the Helena Valley along Prickly Pear Creek, offering streamside access to future generations in a populated valley with few such opportunities.

Trout Unlimited's Montana Water Program has already lent in-kind support to this project in the areas of water rights interpretation and will continue to help in securing funding and technical expertise throughout the project timeframe. In the long term, we hope to assist Prickly Pear Land Trust in securing additional instream flow in Sevenmile Creek. Our efforts to restore fisheries are only enhanced by working with land trusts like Prickly Pear.

Thank you for your generous support in perpetuating coldwater fisheries and their habitats.

Sincerely,

Patrick Byorth

Trout Unlimited: America's Leading Coldwater Fisheries Conservation Organization
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